

Spence	Thornberry	Watkins
Stabenow	Thune	Watts (OK)
Stearns	Thurman	Waxman
Stenholm	Tiahrt	Weiner
Strickland	Tierney	Weldon (FL)
Stump	Toomey	Weldon (PA)
Stupak	Towns	Weller
Sununu	Trafigant	Wexler
Sweeney	Turner	Weygand
Tancred	Udall (CO)	Whitfield
Tanner	Udall (NM)	Wicker
Tauscher	Upton	Wilson
Tauzin	Velazquez	Wolf
Taylor (MS)	Visclosky	Woolsey
Taylor (NC)	Vitter	Wu
Terry	Walsh	Wynn
Thomas	Walsh	Young (AK)
Thompson (CA)	Wamp	
Thompson (MS)	Waters	

NAYS—1

Souder

NOT VOTING—33

Burr	Frank (MA)	Meehan
Campbell	Franks (NJ)	Miller (FL)
Clay	Goodlatte	Myrick
Clayton	Hayes	Neal
Clyburn	Holden	Pastor
Coble	Holt	Spratt
Danner	Hooley	Stark
DeLauro	Klink	Talent
Eshoo	McCollum	Watt (NC)
Ford	McIntosh	Wise
Fossella	McIntyre	Young (FL)

□ 1820

Mr. SOUDER changed his vote from "yea" to "nay."

Messrs. COBURN, DOOLEY of California and CONDIT changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the motion was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Ose). Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees:

Messrs. HYDE, GEKAS, ARMEY, CONYERS and NADLER.

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 4035

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 4035.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2614, CERTIFIED DEVELOPMENT COMPANY PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 1999

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2614) to amend the Small Business Investment Act to make improvements to the certified development company program, and for other purposes, with a House amendment to the Senate amendment thereto, insist on the House amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York? The Chair hears none and, without objection, ap-

points the following conferees: Mr. TALENT, Mr. ARMEY, and Ms. VELAZQUEZ.

There was no objection.

MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking and Financial Services be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 5417) to rename the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act as the "McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act," and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the bill, as follows:

H.R. 5417

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT.

Section 1 of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11301 note; Public Law 100-77) is amended by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following new subsection:

"(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the 'McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act'."

SEC. 2. REFERENCES.

Any reference in any law, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act shall be deemed to be a reference to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to yield 30 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE) for the purpose of controlling the minority's time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, changing the title of a major piece of legislation may seem like a small step for Congress to take, but it has symbolic meaning to the congressional family.

Changing the name Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Act to the McKinney-Vento Act implies putting the names of two of our most esteemed colleagues together, two colleagues who have passed away, the one most recently. Like Mr. McKinney, Bruce Vento devoted his life to the problems of the disadvantaged. He symbolized much as a friend, he symbolized much as a colleague, he symbolized much as a constructive legislator.

I think, though, it is important to note that this particular bill was suggested by our good friend the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE).

I certainly strongly supported him and am appreciative that our leadership concurred.

Mr. Speaker, I think at this point I would like to turn to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE) to outline the causes and background of this bill and certainly to express my strongest support for his initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to thank the gentleman from Iowa. I remember the very first day that the gentleman from Iowa and I discovered that Bruce Vento had incurred cancer. And we talked and we said that Bruce Vento is a very, very special person and we ought to do something very special for him. This is the least we can do.

I love Bruce Vento. I sat next to him for almost 24 years. There are so many things that I could say about him, but maybe more than anything else, Bruce Vento cared. He was a caring, loving human being. He cared about our poor. He cared about our underprivileged. He cared about equal justice. He cared about preserving the beauty of our natural resources. He cared about the rights of consumers. He cared about the future of our Nation's youth. And it is difficult to say what he cared about most. But very possibly he might have cared most about our homeless. And each of these issues, each of these causes has lost a great friend.

Bruce Vento was a great leader, a tireless champion of the poor and the homeless; and he brought such tremendous compassion, intellect, vision, dedication, persistence, tenacity to the work of writing our Nation's laws. It has also been written that all of this to be genius must be accompanied by good sense. And Bruce Vento had good sense which made him a genius of both a person and a legislator.

The bill before us today, cosponsored by each and every member of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, both Democrat and Republican and countless other Members of this House, would rename the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. It is fitting to Congressman Bruce Vento's tireless commitment to the homeless. We will pass this today. I hope it will become law in this Congress.

For 24 years, Bruce was a tireless champion and advocate on behalf of homeless people. And he wrote many if not every law that brings compassion and comfort to our homeless, to our poor and destitute.

□ 1830

Traces of his tireless commitment can be found on any forgotten street in urban America. His commitment can be found in a shelter where families go for a hot meal. His commitment can be found in a vacant building that has

been converted into a place where the homeless can find a bed and a roof over their heads.

There is so much more I would like to say, but so many others wish to speak on this bill and on Bruce's behalf, too. I just want to say one thing. He was blessed, too, with a great staff; and I came to know two of them in particular, Larry Romans and Kirsten Johnson-Obey, and so much of Bruce's legislative record was only possible because of their great ability and work, too. They represent the best of what congressional staff can be, and I know that Bruce looking down on us would feel it very important that we make that statement, too.

I urge everyone to support this bill and honor Bruce.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA).

(Mrs. ROUKEMA asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise with a very heavy heart tonight. I worked a long time with Mr. Vento on the Committee on Banking and Financial Services. We traded back and forth. When the Democrats were in the majority, he was the chairman and I was the ranking; and alternately when the Republicans took charge, but we always tried best to work together for whatever was good for the American people.

This is very little to-do today but much, much necessary to the visible recognition of Mr. Vento's tireless efforts here in this Congress and certainly in improving the lot of the Nation's homeless. So it is very appropriate, even if it is not enough, but it is very appropriate for us to name this the McKinney-Vento bill in recognition of his tireless work.

I will not go into the full explanation. The gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE) has very nicely outlined the work that Mr. Vento has done, but let me give a few other personal observations. He certainly was a major force behind the 1987 law that established the emergency shelter grant program for traditional housing, as the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE) has outlined; and, of course, his activities on the Committee on Resources are outstanding. I was privileged to work with him closely on the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, and I remember as a relatively new member of the committee when he gave leadership with the Resolution Trust Corporation and the task force.

As I remember it, it was a task force that oversaw the cleanup of the savings and loan debacle of the 1980s. I will say, it was a good example of how Mr. Vento always maintained his standards on behalf of the people; financial integ-

rity and intellectual integrity and personal integrity, and it was a good example of that. But I guess there was never an action that we took on the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, whether it be on homelessness or whether it was on financial modernization or on savings and loan cleanup, his contributions always displayed that he was an advocate for the people to improve their lives. Knowing him as I did, I can say that he had a heart and a soul, and we recognize him today for that.

I guess I also want to say that we did not agree on every issue. There were issues on which we agreed to disagree, but I will say it was a symbol of his stature of integrity and honesty and professionalism that we could always agree to disagree, but there was never any personal bickering or animosity; and there was always the respect of a gentleman and a scholar.

We are going to miss him desperately. I know I am and others in this Congress are going to miss him desperately, but I have to say in addition to what we are doing tonight, I for one am speaking now only for myself, nevertheless recognize the health issues and concerns that are integral to his passing; and I believe that whatever else there is that needs to be done, and there is some unfinished business out there with respect to the asbestos questions with relationship to housing and other uses of asbestos in our communities, but I think we also have to recognize that there has to be renewed effort and research and expanded research, as much as we have done this year on cancer research. But we will have to redirect efforts next year, or rather expand efforts not redirect them, expand them next year, with the recognition of the loss of our beloved and honorable colleague, Bruce Vento.

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KANJORSKI).

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with our chairman of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services and ranking member in paying tribute to Bruce Vento. Bruce was the sort of fellow that was a real legislator, a quiet, gentle man.

I came to the Congress a number of terms after Bruce, but I was always impressed with the fact that he would willingly offer his insights as to how the Congress operated and how we could best serve our constituents. Speaking of constituents, Bruce really had two: that excellent district he represented in Minnesota but also all the needy and homeless people of America. Their benefits over these last many years, although they probably have no awareness of the fact, are to a great deal due to his ever-present desire to see that the American government recognized that there are needs in this country that must be served, and he was their best ambassador and representative to serve those needs. I think it is most fitting that we tie

Bruce Vento to the McKinney Act, because in a way Stew McKinney had some of the same characteristics of gentleness that Bruce had; an able legislator, not a partisan but a person that worked with real integrity. I suspect Bruce and Stew will be in conversation now; and we in the Congress, we in America, are poorer for their passing but inevitably as life makes its cycle we all come to pass.

I am very pleased and honored to join the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE) in supporting this resolution, and I hope that we have the full support of the entire Congress.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) for yielding and this opportunity to speak.

Mr. Speaker, I rise as a cosponsor and strong supporter of H.R. 5417, legislation to rename the Stewart McKinney Homeless Assistance Act as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. To borrow a line from our 16th President, arguably our greatest President, Abraham Lincoln of Illinois, it is altogether fitting and proper that we honor our recently departed colleague, Representative Bruce Vento of Minnesota, in this way. After all, if it were not for Representative Vento and his determined efforts, the Stewart B. McKinney Assistance Act would never have been created.

Bruce Vento was one of the earliest and strongest proponents of enacting a major Federal legislative response to homelessness. His tireless efforts were rewarded with the enactment in 1987 of the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, but his dedication to homelessness did not stop there. Up until the very end of his life, Representative Vento remained a vocal and true champion of homeless assistance programs. The success of the McKinney Act in helping hundreds of thousands of Americans regain the stability in their life is testament to the foresight, hard work and character of the man who helped to shape this law. In celebration of this success and of the gentleman's distinguished congressional career, it is only fitting that the act on which Bruce Vento worked with such passion is renamed in his honor, and I am very honored to be on this bill.

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I join my colleagues in adding our colleague, Congressman Bruce Vento's, name to this important legislation. We all knew that some day Members of Congress would stand here in the well of the House to praise Bruce's many accomplishments. It is truly sad that this day has come so soon.

In my years in Congress, I have enjoyed a close working relationship with

Congressman Vento as colleagues on the Committee on Banking and Financial Services. The Committee on Banking and Financial Services deals with some of the most complex issues in all of Congress. Bruce put in the time and mastered the range of complex issues. As a teacher himself, prior to coming to Congress, he became a resource to all committee members, providing counsel on a host of complex issues from financial modernization to intricate housing programs.

All along the way, Bruce served as a tireless advocate for all consumers. He truly stood up for the working people time and time again. He made it his focus to ensure that individual's rights are protected when they do business with the most powerful banks and financial companies in the world. His legacy on the committee and his impact on consumer banking law will live for decades to come. It is truly appropriate that we add his name to this legislation, the aim of which is to aid the homeless. Providing housing for the less fortunate was part of Congressman Vento's daily work. President Clinton said it best yesterday at a White House event saying, and I quote, "that Congressman Vento was a great teacher, a great representative and a wonderful human being."

Let me convey to Congressman Vento's family, his friends, his dedicated long-time staff here in Washington and Minnesota, and to the people of Congressman Vento's fourth district my strongest and heartfelt condolences.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN).

(Mr. BENTSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to rise in strong support of this bill, and I commend the chairman and the ranking member for their work on this. The people of Minnesota clearly have suffered a loss in the passing of Bruce Vento, but so have the American people; and also, I think all of his colleagues on the Committee on Banking and Financial Services and his colleagues on the Committee on Resources as well.

I had the opportunity to serve with Bruce for the last 6 years, and I found him as one who could be a mentor, who could be an ally, occasionally he was an adversary but he was always an honorable one in any role that he played.

Having sat through numerous hearings with him, having traveled with him, it is hard to understand the level of institutional knowledge that has been lost in his passing.

I dare say that Bruce Vento's fingerprints are probably on every major piece of financial legislation that has passed this Congress in the last quarter century and every major piece of environmental legislation, national parks

legislation, that has come through this Congress.

We, as American citizens, owe him a great debt of gratitude. Bruce was one who was willing and steadfast in his support of the American consumers, of the average working men and women of this country; of ensuring that their rights were protected; ensuring that our environment was protected, but Bruce was also one that at the end of the day felt it was his role, I believe, as a Member of this House to get something done.

He was willing to reach across the aisle, to reach that bridge across issues that divided members on the committees and in the House, between this body and the other body, to get legislation passed that in the end would do good for the American people.

□ 1845

I just want to say that I think it is extremely fitting that his name be added with McKinney's name to the homeless act, and I commend the chairman and the ranking member for doing that.

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to echo the sentiments that have already been expressed by so many on this floor, but also so many throughout America.

I first knew of Bruce Vento through one of his fellow Minnesotans who moved to the community where I live in Chicago, Al Arcello, who was actively involved in prevention programs.

He said to me when I came, you ought to get to know Bruce Vento, and get to know him I did. I got to know him through his work, through observation of his sensitivity and his ability to reach out, especially to those who are sometimes called the least ones in our society, those who are untouchable, unreachable; the homeless, those that we do not always see.

I serve on the board of directors of a homeless newspaper, Streetwise. I can tell the Members, from all of those who sell Streetwise, all of those who have benefited from assistance to the homeless, I say on their behalf, we thank Bruce Vento for reaching out and representing those who oftentimes are left behind and not represented.

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS).

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening in support of H.R. 5417, to rename the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

I am very proud to join with my colleagues in doing this and paying tribute to a very, very great human being, a great legislator, a great and impor-

tant and respected Member of the United States Congress, now deceased.

I am very proud that I have had the opportunity to serve on the Committee on Banking and Financial Services with Mr. Vento. I am very proud and pleased that I came to this Congress at a time when many of the great minds still held forth in this Congress.

Mr. Vento was one of those Members who was an expert in the field of banking and housing and the wilderness. He exemplified the best in what a legislator could and should be all about.

This that we do today is but a small tribute to him, because when we review the tremendous contributions that he has made to this country and to this Nation, one could understand why we would readily want to in some way show our appreciation for all that he has done for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, it was said today when I had a discussion with one of my former staff members that he remembered Bruce Vento because he always concerned himself with these questions: How will this measure impact the environment, and how will this measure impact low- and moderate-income communities?

Mr. Speaker, this is very important to me and to members of my staff. We work for the least of these. We do our best to represent poor people and to represent working people, and to represent folks who do not oftentimes have any way of connecting to the great policy-making bodies, either at the local, State, or Federal level.

So when we see legislators who do not have to necessarily spend all of their time trying to represent working people or poor people, we are extremely appreciative for that. Mr. Vento was such a legislator. The work that he has done, both for the wilderness and the homeless, is appreciated in so many ways.

In 1994, the Wilderness Society honored Bruce Vento with its prestigious Ansel Adams conservation award. That is just, again, a small token for the work that he has done to ensure the continued viability of millions of acres of wilderness lands, forests, and precious national parks from Alaska to American Samoa to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in Minnesota.

With the preservation of these lands, the Earth itself has prospered from the passion of Bruce Vento. Again, the work that he did for the wilderness and the preservation of our precious national parks was matched by the work that he did defending the rights and humanity of the homeless. He saw his work for the homeless as a defense of human rights.

I am hopeful that what we do here today not only inspires us, but many others yet to come who will some day serve in this body so that they can understand that they, too, can have an impact on the direction of this Nation and of this world; that they, too, can come here with a vision for what is good for this country, what is good for

human beings, and work in ways that will help to better this society.

I join my colleagues here today to say to our friend, our colleague, Mr. Vento, we are going to miss him. We are going to miss all that he has taught us and the ways that he led us, but we are going to remember him in this small way, by the renaming of this legislation. With the renaming of this legislation, the work that he has done will live on and will never be forgotten.

Again, I am very appreciative for the opportunity to have served with Mr. Vento.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just stress a couple of things about the life of Bruce Vento. He was a wonderfully committed legislator who combined compassion with practicality; who had populist concerns, but not a populist hate.

The committee that I served with Bruce on, the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, has jurisdiction over banks and housing and over the economy, in some ways. It is interesting to me that in Bruce's work, he was not against any individuals or institutions.

In fact, he was a liberal Democrat who rather liked banks, especially smaller banks, and especially community banks. He just understood that it was important, if you have a banking system, that that system serves all Americans. So his emphasis as someone in the banking community was never to be against anything, but to be for better ways for banks to serve. That is one reason that he developed such an interest in ensuring that competition was maintained and that investment was maintained in various aspects of our communities.

Part of this relates to the American dream. All of us have various feelings about what the American dream is. One is that it includes a home. Well, issues of the homeless concern people that by definition have been deprived aspects of the American dream. We have all come to understand to some degree, and none of us as deeply as we should, that homelessness is not simply an aspect of someone without a structure. It usually involves a whole group of societal problems. Some of them might be psychiatric, some might be elements that relate to addictions, and sometimes disease itself.

Mr. Speaker, the problems of the homeless came to the attention of Congress rather late. In fact, it is astonishing how little attention public bodies paid to this problem. But because of Bruce, we started to.

About 13 years ago, finally the law was enacted. When that law was enacted, and a number of people had roles in ensuring that it came about, Bruce led the way. Then, as it was about to be enacted, it was revealed that one of our Members, this one on the Republican side, who was a man of some substance but had an ailment, in this case an ail-

ment sometimes identified with the homeless, he got pneumonia related to a social disease called AIDS.

This Republican stood up for people that had problems sometimes analogous to his own, sometimes much more serious. Bruce Vento suggested that the bill be named for him; that is, it was Bruce Vento's idea and his argument that this initiative that came largely from the majority party, the then the majority party, the Democratic Party, would be named for a Republican, Stewart McKinney.

I think nothing could be more appropriate, as we look at the life of Bruce Vento, a man who had a disease related to a different kind of social problem, one that relates to industrialization, asbestos, that he should have his name associated with the McKinney bill, which was actually from the beginning more a Vento bill. So this became the Vento-McKinney bill.

I would also like to comment as someone who, from a more distant perspective, followed the career of Bruce in his advocacy of our national park system.

Bruce basically picked up the cudgels of the Udall family and has become the greatest congressional champion of our national park system. Part of this which is interesting to me is not only the issue of parks and their role in society, but parks stand in the American dream not only with the notion of the West and the great body of forest and mountains that is our country, but they are basically second homes available to all Americans, whether those Americans actually earned them or not at a particular moment in time. They are refuges for everybody.

In a way, the national park system that Bruce was such a champion of was a home circumstance. So Bruce Vento leaves as his mark on this body not only the notion of standing up for concerns for the homeless, but also for ensuring that all Americans have a second home at any point in time within our national parks.

Finally, let me just conclude with a couple of observations of a very personal level. Bruce was a very committed individual with an absolutely infectious laugh. He also had a very sardonic wit, particularly to those he opposed. Sometimes my party was more the beneficiary of the second than the first.

But interestingly, in this era in which we talk about nonpartisanship and bipartisanship, Bruce gave a very good name to the word "partisan." Bruce was a partisan Democrat, but he was always with decency and always with humor, always with a sense of perspective. This is one of the things so many of us loved very much about Bruce.

□ 1900

Finally, I would like to echo a comment that my good friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE), made about a staff member, because I

think it symbolizes a great deal. The congressional family is a wide family and Larry Romans who worked with Bruce was as much an alter ego as anyone could be. On legislation, he certainly played a larger role than most Members of Congress. I think that is something that only Members of Congress truly understand.

So our heart goes out to Bruce's family, his three kids, his wife, and also his staff.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have heard just a few of the sentiments that the Members of Congress have, feel, share about our beloved brother Bruce. The words of the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) were especially eloquent. I thank the gentleman for making them so eloquently, and I know Bruce appreciates them.

When I think of the accomplishments of the past two Congresses when I have had the pleasure of serving as either the de facto or de jure ranking member, none of them would have been possible without Bruce. When we think of credit union reform, I did not attend a meeting in my office without Bruce Vento by my side.

When I think of the meetings that we had on what some have said is the pre-eminent legislative enactment to this Congress, the financial services modernization, the Graham-Leach-Bliley bill, it would not have happened without Bruce, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Financial Services and Consumer Credit, because it required understanding and it required compromise and it required tenacity and goodwill, balance, perseverance; and it was essential that Bruce be there. It would not have happened if Bruce had opposed it.

It would not have been shaped the way it was without Bruce helping to shape it; that is the business side of the job. That is extremely important, but there are so many other things that go into this Congress, the intangibles, when we get to know an individual. I probably knew Bruce as well as I knew anybody in this body.

I have been on a few trips in my tenure in Congress. I never went on a trip when I did not ask Bruce to come with me. He came with me most of the time. One of the great values of the trips is not just learning about other countries and other people, but coming to know your colleagues, too; and we came to know each other so very well.

We shared so many things together: shared values, shared meals, shared wine. We shared a common heritage not just as Americans, but as Italian-Americans, and Bruce was so proud of that heritage. He knew how to live and he knew how to die, and he lived right.

He worked hard and he played hard. He worked by the rules. He played by the rules. He knew how to be ferocious. He knew how to laugh. Traveling with

him was always a great pleasure because we knew he worked and worked hard, so we could be proud of the trip; but we knew that he would love it and make it an enjoyable trip the entire way, too.

Bruce started out his career as a teacher and then he came to Congress, but throughout his entire congressional career, he taught us a great many things. For most of his 24 years, he taught us how to live, and for the last 6 months or so he taught us how to die. We honor ourselves when we honor Bruce by naming this homeless bill the McKinney-Vento homeless bill.

Mr. Speaker, I insert the following article for the RECORD:

BRUCE VENTO: JUST ANOTHER GUY FROM THE EAST SIDE WHO WENT ON TO DO GREAT THINGS

(By Garrison Keillor)

There was a dinner in Washington, D.C., Tuesday night to honor a guy from St. Paul's East Side.

The president dropped by and dozens of U.S. representatives, Republicans and Democrats. And at the end, when the guy from the East Side stood up to say his piece, he got a long, long standing ovation. You could have gone around the room and stolen everyone's dessert, they were so busy applauding him.

Congressman Bruce Vento, a modest man and a hard worker, is stepping down after 24 years representing the 4th Congressional District, and I must admit I voted for him all these years because I'm a yellow-dog Democrat and he's a Democrat. So now I'm a little taken aback to see what a good man he is who I unthinkingly supported all these years.

This isn't how our civics teachers taught us to exercise the franchise, but a person doesn't have oceans of time to study up on candidates. I sure don't. I heard Mr. Vento speak once years ago, speak very movingly about the problem of homelessness and about the importance of wilderness, and that was good enough for me. But if he had stood on his hind legs and barked, I still would have voted for him.

Wilderness preservation and the plight of the homeless are not issues that pay a big political bonus. You become a wilderness advocate and you're going to be hung in effigy and yelled at by large men in plaid shirts. Homeless people tend not to turn out in numbers at the polls.

But Mr. Vento applied himself to the issues he cared about, did his homework, made the rounds of his colleagues, carried the water, dug the ditches, fought the good fight, made the compromises, and wrote the landmark legislation that became law and that made a real difference in the world. And I'm not sure how many of us in St. Paul are aware of this.

There have been only three congressmen from St. Paul in my memory, and that covers 50 years. Gene McCarthy, Joe Karth, Bruce Vento—all DFLers, all good men and all of them got to Congress on the strength of yellow-dog Democrats like me. They got re-elected simply by doing their job, representing working people, speaking the conscience of the Democratic Party, and applying themselves to the nuts and bolts of Congress.

A political party serves a big function that TV or newspapers can't. It pulls in idealistic young people, puts them to work in the cause, trains them, seasons them, and gives the talented and the diligent a chance to rise. If it can produce a Bruce Vento, then a party has reason to exist, and if it can't, then it doesn't. Simple as that. Then it fades, as the DFL has.

People say it's inevitable for political parties to fade, part of the loss of the sense of community, blah blah blah, that people are cynical about politics and more interested in lifestyle and media and so forth, but we are poorer for the loss of parties and the devaluation of endorsement.

Bruce Vento never could've gotten elected in a media-driven campaign, the sort in which high-priced consultants and media buyers spend 15 million bucks to make the candidate into a beautiful illusion.

Mr. Vento is the wrong man for that kind of politics. His eyebrows are too big; he isn't cool enough. He is a modest and principled and hard-working guy, but you couldn't put this over in a 30-second commercial. He managed to get to Congress because there was a strong DFL party that endorsed him, and so voters like me pulled the lever and gave Mr. Vento the wherewithal to be a great congressman. Which he, being a true East Sider, never told us he was. But which I now think he was.

Unknowningly, we did something great in sending him there. And our partisan loyalty gave him the freedom to take on thankless tasks, like protecting wilderness and dealing with the homeless.

I sat in the back at Mr. Vento's dinner and thought what a shock it is when you realize that the country is in the hands of people your own age. You go along for years thinking it's being run by jowly old guys in baggy suits and then you see that the jowly old guys are people you went to school with.

Mr. Vento is about my age, and I feel for him. He is fighting lung cancer and it has taken its toll on him. He looks haggard but game.

His three boys were at the dinner in Washington, and their wives, and the event felt like a real valedictory. If Mr. Vento had wanted to make us all cry into our pudding, it wouldn't have taken much.

But he was upbeat and talking about the future and about national parks and the decoding of the human genome and saying, "All we need to do is take this new knowledge and apply it to public policy," and thanking everybody and grinning, and you had to admire him for his command of the occasion.

A man who is desperately ill and on his way out of public life stages a dinner that raises money for a scholarship fund for teachers. Bruce Vento is a man of great bravery and devotion and foresight who represented us nobly in Congress, whether we knew it or not.

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, today, we say goodbye to a good friend and colleague, Bruce Vento.

Bruce was a humanitarian in every sense of the word.

He called environmental issues his one "true passion" and he pursued that passion in a way that lifted up all Americans.

He was a strong leader in the Committee on Resources with a keen understanding of environmental issues.

He worked to protect and strengthen America's national treasures—our urban parks, our public lands, and other public resources, and he fought for tropical rain forests and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

He believed in making our country not just a wealthy country but a beautiful country, marked by forests, rivers, mountains and streams that all American could visit and enjoy.

Bruce was "a hero" who had "done more for parks than anyone I know," one of his fans said of him.

Bruce was also special because he cared so very deeply about all people and the sanctity of the places in which they lived.

He earned a reputation as a strong advocate for the homeless, and it was well-deserved. He tried to lift people up through better housing and emergency shelter, a powerful reminder that this country should not leave behind anyone.

Bruce spend the last decade working for the Hmong people who fought on the side of the United States in the war in Vietnam, and who were trying to become citizens of our country.

He was also a tireless advocate for consumer protections as a senior member of the Banking and Financial Services Committee.

A strong voice for his constituents, a beloved son of the state of Minnesota, Bruce represented that state's 4th district with dedication and commitment to his party and to the people he represented.

Bruce and I entered Congress in the same year and my journey through this institution is bound with Bruce's journey. I am proud to say that I had a wonderful colleague, a good friend, and a man who will be sorely missed not just by me, but by a nation that prides itself on a commitment to democratic values, a safe environment and humane treatment for every American.

We will miss you Bruce.

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart as the House pays tribute to the distinguished work of our friend and colleague, Bruce Vento.

It is appropriate that we recognize his lifelong work as a champion of the homeless by renaming the "Stewart B. McKinney Act" the "McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act." In 1987, it was Bruce who led the efforts to enact a comprehensive homeless assistance program, named after his late colleague and friend, Stewart McKinney, then the Ranking Republican on the Housing Subcommittee.

I am privileged to have worked closely with Bruce over the last several years, in particular, on homeless reform legislation designed to focus efforts on permanent housing and the hope of ending homelessness forever. As the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity, I have known no other that has been more sincerely dedicated to the problems associated with homelessness and families in need of affordable housing. He will be missed.

Life is fleeting, for us all. But what we do while we are here can affect so many and have such a lasting impact. Bruce's tireless work has made and will continue to make a real difference in countless lives of those less fortunate.

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TANCREDI). Without objection, the previous question is ordered.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read a third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may